St Coster P-S (ca.1857) 1966 SRS Bush Negroes SRS

The Bush Negroes in the Colony of Suriname. Their Life, Customs, and Habits

[De Boschnegers in de Kolonie Suriname, Hun Leven, Zeden en Gewoonten.]

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[Title page]

Frontispiece.

Bush Negroes in the Colony of Surinam

3 Cases-1 F-1 (ca. 1857) 1966 SRS Bush Negroes SRS
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Introduction

114 After having left the plantation life in the colony of Surinam,
12 I went back there in the beginning of 1851 with the plan, as the
[101] result of an agreement reached by me with a Belgian firm, to
send shiploads of wood to the motherland and Belgium.

[123] I undertook my journeys to the Bush Negroes for this purpose
and visited most of their dwelling places, something that entailed
effort and great cost, since I distributed ample presents everywhere
for the purpose of thereby acquiring their confidence, which they
do not readily grant to Whites.

123 At my very first encounter I took the precaution of politely
[576] greeting each one of them without distinction and shaking their
[177] hands, a practice taken over by them from the Whites in the
most recent times, which assures them of a feeling of good-will
such as they experience among themselves but never from a White.

[352] I spoke to them frankly and in a friendly way, sat next to them
in their huts on their low stools, and partook of their meals. In
short -- I lived for a while without reserve or fear among them,
paying amply for everything that I enjoyed in this way or that.

[273] I also permitted them, whenever they wanted to use any of
my store of beverages, such as wine, beer, brandy, and gin, to
ask me for it quietly, so that I would be able to order my servants
to offer them what they had requested. In addition I supplied /2/
them amply with dram (1), herbs, and lead and, in order to show

1. A kind of inland rum (sugar spirits).

generosity to the women as well, frequently gave them and the
children biscuits, cake, or some coins.

[121] In the beginning they were very reserved and mistrustful,
but gradually, and after some difficult years, became more open
with me, so that I, adapting myself entirely to their practices,
was able to carry out my plan to have the necessary wood processed
by them.

/2 cont./

114 Much wood was ordered by me, and all that I received was
439 paid for according to the actual value and in accordance with a concluded agreement.

123 I lent several of them money, in spite of already having been misled and cheated by them frequently, and continued to treat them amicably, to give them articles of clothing, and, indeed, sometimes for bad wood, which they tried to force upon me among the good pieces, even though I noticed this, I nonetheless continued to pay them decently just as for good wood, whereby I made them realize that I wanted to do business in an accommodating way.

So I learned more and more of their way of life, customs, and habits, respected these in everything, and finally succeeded in leading them back from various bad habits and shortcomings and to observe a more honest way of dealing with me. I was even able to bring it about so that I enjoyed a blind trust and in return was able to give my complete trust to some.

114 Since the beginning of 1857 I have been the owner of a
439 sawmill with which the previous owner could do little or nothing because he always lacked the logs needed for the sawing of boards, whereas I, on the other hand, receive so much wood from the Bush Negroes that it is frequently too much for me.

123 Many of them who are not even my regular workmen refuse
439 to sell their wood on the plantations and bring it all the way to my sawmill located near the town, because, so they contend, they also want to share in the privileges which the other Bush Negroes enjoy in accordance with the agreement concluded with me.

123 Most of the Bush Negroes know me, if not in person, at least by name.

I have also had to promise them that I will bring up my son /3/ so that later he will be able to take my place and deal with their descendants in the same manner as I am now doing with them, while they, too, drill their children to conduct themselves toward my son as the parents do toward me. In this way they want to make any split between my family and theirs impossible, even in the future.

Djuka

/3 cont./

123 In connection with what I have already said concerning an agreement concluded by me with them, I regard it as not inappropriate to give here a sketch of the manner in which I was requested to enter into this agreement with them, and what happened before they came to an agreement with me in such an extraordinary manner.

After I had already dealt with them for some time in an increasingly open manner and my journeys to visit them had become more frequent, some of the chiefs confidentially notified me that, although they had already come to know me over a considerable period of time and regarded me as a good and honest man, since they had experienced better treatment from me than from many others with whom they had previously had dealings, they could nonetheless not simply assume that I would always remain the same and that possibly I had completely different intentions with regard to them which they might later regret. For this reason many of them had still been reluctant to commit themselves definitely to work for me. In order to do away completely with this mistrust among them, I continued to stay with them in the bush for a considerable time and always demonstrated that I had honest intentions with regard to them, until after a few weeks, as a result of the open-handed giving away of food and drink, I noticed that I was short of everything and was forced to send my vessel to Paramaribo in order to fetch what was needed, whereby I found myself completely alone among them.

123 675 [622] When thus, after the departure of my vessel, I spent a number of hours talking about my plans with the headman of the village, called Spanti Passi (1), in his hut, he strongly advised me

1. Spanti (a large flat fish) way.

to conclude at this time the agreement customary among them. I agreed and immediately requested him to accompany me via a bush path to the nearest village, Manjaondro (2), in order to

2. Under the manja tree.

Djuka

123
675
[501]

/3 cont./

request the captain residing there, Kwasi jenlil, to man all the available korjalen (3) and to send them around to the camps of

3. Small vessels made out of tree trunks.

the Bush Negroes, in order to notify all the Aukaners /Aucaners/ /4/ in that district that I, sojourning entirely by myself among them, wished to see them all together so as to have the opportunity, in the place to be determined by them and in accordance with their manner and customs, to take the oath of agreement to remain at all times faithful to one another.

Three days were spent in deliberations and consultations among various captains, council members, and elders, before I could succeed in obtaining their consent for this.

[527]

Finally, however, it was decided to have the agreement ceremony take place on Friday (a day that is holy among them), when the sun reached its midday point.

On this day, around eleven o'clock in the forenoon, one of the oldest and most influential among them took a clean teacup, put in it some dram mixed with herbs, and took a few finely ground plants which he moistened with river water and squeezed over the cup.

I and seven of the most important people then had three small slashes cut into the right hand with a razor. The blood from this, having been taken up with a little flock of cotton, was also squeezed into the cup, and the cotton washed out with river water and wrung out so often that no more signs of blood showed in it. The one and the other having been thoroughly stirred in the cup, the latter was placed on a stool in the open air. At twelve o'clock exactly, a great number of men, women, and children gathered around the stool on which the cup stood, by the side of which they placed me.

Three gunshots were fired. Among all those present a profound silence reigned, whereupon the cup was offered, first to me and then to the other seven persons whose blood was mingled with mine, in order to drink a draught from the contents, whereupon it had to go around to all the men so that, however little, they would

Djuka

123 /4 cont./
675 drink something from it or merely smell it; indeed! when it was empty, the remaining men who had not yet drunk from it or smelled it had to lick it.

I was then embraced by the headmen and many of the women; they flung the right arm over my left shoulder and the left arm under my right arm and rested their heads for a moment against my right cheek.

[273] After the conclusion, while much dram was drunk, general exuberant gaiety prevailed, and only then was /5/ I told that they had purposely cut me first and given me a drink first in order to ascertain whether I trusted them completely or whether, so entirely by myself, I would have been afraid to submit to their wishes and to do what they demanded of me; they assured me that if I had refused to be the first, none of them would have wanted to conclude the agreement with me.

If, therefore, I had not conducted myself as they wished, I would have missed out completely on this alliance which was so highly important and profitable for me.

466 On the following day many of them came to tell me that
313 their work places on the river Cottica supplied little of the kinds of wood that had been pointed out by me for processing, but they declared themselves ready to go and process them immediately for me on the Upper Commewijne river, where they were sure of finding richer forests.

Since the last-named river was closed to them at that time by a governmental decree, I made a request for access in the year
[361] 1854, in order to be able to work with them at this river. This was granted to me, and since then a few hundred Bush Negroes have been staying there and have laid out dwellings and croplands, while they continuously, with unexampled industry, process the wood needed by me and deliver it to the sawmill.

3: Coster--6 F-5 (ca. 1857) 1966 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Surinam SR4

/5 cent./

Chapter I

Topographical Description of the Colony of Surinam

Surinam, or Dutch Guiana, is bounded on the north by the Atlantic Ocean, on the east by Cayenne, or French Guiana, from which it is separated by the river Marowyne /Maroni/; to the south it loses itself in ancient, still unexplored forests up to where the Tumutumaque mountain range establishes the border with Brazil; finally, in the west it is separated by the river Corantyn /Courantyne/ from Berbice, or British Guiana.

The distance between the boundary rivers Marowyne and Corantyn is 56 and one half hours. According to the latest measurements, /6/ the location is between 54° and 57° west longitude and 2° and 6° north latitude, and the colony has an expanse of 2500 square G. M., of which scarcely 700 are as yet known.

The name Surinam stems, according to general opinion, from an Indian tribe called Surinen which was found there at the time of discovery, but which later withdrew to the branches of the Amazon River.

The river was never called anything other than great coma (great river) by the natives.-

The population, according to the latest reports offered to the States General, numbers 67,709 souls, as: 15,567 free, 38,042 emancipated on July 1, 1863, 8,000 Bush Negroes, 1,000 Indians, 5,000 slaves in hiding or escaped.

Chapter II

Origin and Settlement of the Bush Negroes

The Bush Negroes stem from runaway slaves in former times, and later, in 1712, from the slaves who were hidden in the forests by their masters in order to escape the levy of Cassard, but did not return to their masters; after the peace that they concluded with the Whites on September 19, 1762, they received the name of

/6 cont:/

175 pacified Bush Negroes. From then on they received from the
648 Netherlands Government annual presents consisting of gun, lead, tobacco, rice, salt, dram, and so forth.

647 In later times, however, these were gradually decreased
829 by the government and finally completely abolished, as a result of which the Negroes no longer so willingly and without remuneration want to be of service to the government; since they believe that with the conclusion of the peace they came to an agreement with the government that on their part the Whites would no longer be hindered in anything, while they would endeavor to assist the government whenever that should be necessary, in return for which the presents mentioned above would be handed out to them annually on the part of the government. At present they complain about their treatment by the government and refuse to believe that they can and may trust the Whites.

101 The Bush Negroes are divided into four tribes: /7/
103 1st. Aucaners, who have their dwelling place, Auca, on the
133 river Marowyne; and they have their working places on the river above Cottica, where they come from the Marowyne by way of the Wanakreek. Among themselves they are called Joeka /Djuka/ and by the Whites, Aucaners, after the plantation Auca, where on 19 October 1760 peace was concluded with them.

2nd. Saramaccaners, who live on the river above Surinam, principally near the waterfall Arasoebanja near Gjengjen and Prakleki, and have their working places along the same river and in the cove /kreek, " creek, cove"/ Taaiboto Kouloegrou and Kassipora. They are called Saramaccaners by the Whites, after the river of that name (where they formerly lived), and among themselves Wouxie or Moejére.

3rd. Mantoewari, who have their dwelling place on the river above Saramacca and their working places along the same river on Maripaston and in the cove Mindrinetie. They are names like the Saramaccaners, since they, too, although separate, live on the same river.

/7 cont./

101 4d. Bonnie /Boni/ Negroes, living on the river above Marowyne; until 1862 they were in a state of slavery among the Aucaners, but at that time, through the intervention of the government, they were released from it. Their name is supposed to be derived from a former runaway slave who had placed himself at their head.

[175]
[567]

Chapter III

Government, Laws, Administration of Justice

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[292] Each of these tribes, except for the Bonnie Negroes, has a chief whom they call granman (governor); the uniform given to him by the government is a blue tunic with epaulets and a cocked hat with white plush.

Among the Aucaners the chief is called Byman, a cunning, courageous, and prudent man, around 63 years old.

The chief of the Saramaccaners is called Abram, an infirm old man who is very weak of character and has little influence.

The Matoowari Negroes have a chief called Kalkoen, who, although aged and infirm, can nonetheless still be called firm of character.

631 /8/ Under their chief they have a certain number of captains and council members. The former are divided into bush captains, who take command in case of war, and into house or land captains, who deal with internal matters with the chief. The token of their prestige given to them by the government consists of a large staff with a round silver ball (drum-major's stick), on which is the Netherlands coat of arms with "Je maintiendrai."

[554]

344 They have a large open shed which serves them as court and which they call kroetoehoso (probably derived from the English "courthouse").

682 Their legislation is very limited. One who kills another is punished with death, one who poisons someone suffers death by torture, provided that substantial irrefutable proof exists. (See Chapter XI below.) If the death penalty is not appropriate, the

612 /8 cont./
[672] culprit is condemned to find the requital in his offspring. His
[567] children, children's children, and great-grandchildren must render
slave services for the family of the person poisoned.

692 Moreover, they usually act in accordance with the judgment
and the decision of their elders or council members. Most punish-
681 ments consist of whip lashes.

Chapter IV

Weapons

411 These consist of rifles, machetes, bow and arrow, and lances.
278 In some cases they also use a kind of cudgel (1). The most dangerous
682

1. An Indian weapon called apootoe.

one that they possess, however, is an assortment of vegetable poisons with which they can secretly strike their enemies and whose effects manifest themselves slowly, but are usually lethal. They not only mix these with one food or another, or in snuff or tobacco, but in the case of some can merely bring them in contact with a part of the body and thereby produce to the most infectious results.

/9/

Chapter V

Dwellings, Practices, Customs, Housekeeping

342 Their huts are constructed low above the ground from un-
824 worked round wood, covered with pina, the leaves of a palm species (1), and surrounded by palisade pales.

1. Euterpe oleracea Mart.

352 The couches and sleeping places within are also made of paling.

354 Inside the hut is found the hearth or place for the fire, on
372 which they cook and in which they constantly maintain a fire for

/9 cont./ they do not like to be without it; at least they do not like to sleep without a fire. Their weapons hang above their sleeping place, which is a hammock, in which man and wife sometimes lie together. Rarely do more than one man and one woman with their small children live in a single hut.

Their articles of clothing, as well as other small belongings, are kept in pagalen, a kind of plaited basketwork, while they keep water, strong drinks, sugar juice, rice, salt, and so forth in calabashes and gedos (2).

2. Both hollowed-out fruit rinds of the Crescentia cagete L. and the Cucurbita lagenaria L., plants from the family of the Cucurbitaceae.

Some of them have cedarwood clothes-chests, which must be specially mounted with a great deal of copper; one also sometimes finds liqueur cellars with gilded bottles.

For the rest everything is left out in the open in the hut.

Often many men come together in one hut for their meals and eat out of one large bowl or calabash. The women withdraw after having placed on very low tables several calabashes or bowls of food for their husbands in the circle in which they are seated, never forgetting to add a large calabash with clean water for washing the hands before and after the meal. The women gather in another hut in order to consume what they kept out for themselves beforehand and what has been left by their husbands.

If an aged person or a highly placed person is in their midst, he is offered the calabash of food first, so that he may take from it what he wants and eat it by himself from an ordinary plate, although seated in the circle, /10/ while the others partake of their meal from the large bowl. In general they talk with one another during the meal, the highly placed person also taking part in the conversation.

/10 cont./

574 The politeness shown toward a guest springs from the idea that unknowingly one of them might easily take the very piece that the important person wished to have, and although no comment would be made on this, it could nonetheless happen that this would trouble the guest for whom they cherish special respect, 818 or that he would thereby consider himself insulted. It is particularly to old age that they pay great respect.

Chapter VI

Household and Agricultural Implements

412 [322] [824] [531] The Bush Negroes mainly use adzes in order to hew their corjalen or canoes out of trees partially burned out beforehand; furthermore, they use planes and chisels in order to work their (usually cedarwood) (1) stools and parels or paddles (2). They are

1. Cedrela odorata L.

2. Hand oar.

especially fond of having these carved with many figures. For them the machete is an indispensable tool that they always carry around and use as a chopping knife, sword, and knife, indeed, even to cut splinters or thorns out of the foot with the tip. They use field axes or hatchets to cut down the bush in order to lay out their small cultivation grounds and to work the wood that they float by rafts and sell.

562 412 [824] [413] The women possess, aside from a machete or knife, also mattocks with which they keep their lands and the place near the dwelling neat; they make brooms from the pina palm racemes or from rice ears bound in sheaves. They like to have scissors, needles, and pins, while for knitting they use a pointed and bent nail.

413 [283] [286] They spin their sewing thread from cotton with a certain tool which they call kéké; they also have a round, wooden tool called sepoe, with which they very nicely and sturdily /11/ make

/11 cont./

286 garments /pandjes/ or articles of dress and other knitted goods.
[413] They also know how to make very attractive hammocks of cotton.

Chapter VII

Food, Drinks, Delicacies, and so forth.

262 [252] Their daily food is mainly rice and cassava (1) bread which

1. Sweet cassava, the farina from the root of the Janipha manihot, not to be confused with Jatropha manihot, which gives the bitter cassava, which, however much is removed by boiling and continued washing, contains a very poisonous component.

is baked on an iron plate and provides a tasty food that can be [241] kept for a long time. During the dry season, the months of September, October, and November, the ground also supplies them with a very mealy and tasty tuber called nappi (2); throughout the year,

2. Dioscorea sativa and Dioscorea alata L.

however, they grow yams, sweet potatoes (3), tayers (4), and cassava.

3. Convolvulus batatas L. and Batatas edulis Choisy.

4. Root from Arum esculentum.

[439] They have bananas only from time to time, whenever they exchange them on plantations for squared wood, which they pur- [433] posely work for this exchange. They know how to obtain wild game [263] and fish in great quantities; salt is an article greatly in demand.

/11 cont./

252 They always prepare their food with much native pepper (5)

5. All Capsicum species.

and in their soup or blaf cook various forest greens (6), which they

6. Kraroe, kalalve from the Amarantus oleraceus, taja leaves from an Arum species.

then eat with finely pounded bananas (called afoefoe) or else with cassava bread or rice dipped into it.

412 They make their spoons from a long strip of the calabash rind.

262 They are great lovers of pinda (7), a kind of groundnut, from

7. Arachis hypogoea L.

which they make various delicacies.

[439] They are particularly fond of bacon and buy it whenever they are in town, salted and smoked; they frequently take barrels of it with them into the bush and are very sparing with it.

/12/ They buy flour or meal only when they have had a bad rice harvest.

273 As drink they use rum or dram, and sometimes they make

439] from the juice of the sugar cane, which they acquire on plantations, a kind of fermented drink which they use especially at festivals. They prefer gin and beer to wine, of which they are no great lovers. The women are very fond of liqueur.

276 Many men and women smoke American tobacco in short clay pipes. The taking of snuff is a passionate habit among some.

Chapter VIII

Festivals, Games, Gods

796

273 They do not have fixed times for the veneration of their gods, and they do this only then when they are amply supplied with strong drink and want to have a gay time for three or four days.

/12 cont./

796 Then they call all the neighbors together to take part in the
273 festivities to be held, which consist of invoking their gods amidst continuous dancing and excessive drinking.

They begin the festivities only on a Friday and usually finish on a Sunday or Monday, depending on the larger or smaller
[147] supply of drink, so, lacking this, the festival ends. After the conclusion they are usually extremely tired and listless and give themselves up entirely to rest for at least two or three days.

It is a definite requirement at these festivities to be very amply supplied with strong drink, because one must drink without
[782] interruption in order to remain in a continuous narcosis. With each drink they first pour a little on the ground, -- so that it, too, on which they find themselves so gay, may participate in their enjoyment.

[262] The merrymakers then take care that they will by no means
[577] be lacking in fish, wild game, bacon, rice, etc., since it is a matter of honor with them to display the most lavish hospitality on such occasions.

776 The gods that they worship are:

Loango Gado,
Papa Gado,
Cromantie Gado,

/13/ names certainly derived from the various African tribes of these names.

In the first two they glorify nature and everything created, from which it therefore appears that these are merely subordinate
[787] gods of the unnamed, single great spirit. The last is above all regarded by them as the mediator who transmits their wishes to the great spirit; he is invoked especially at burial ceremonies and for consultation in connection with serious illnesses.

796 They do not have any other cult or religion, so far as I was
[771] able to discover, but only the fixed habit of still celebrating to-
[132] gether and with their chief and captains on the first Friday of the new moon in the month of October or November, after the long
[783] dry period has set in for good, a great feast that has as its goal a general atonement, to cleanse them of the misdeeds that they have committed.

796 /13 cont./
[782] committed. This feast, at which pigs and poultry are sacrificed, must last for four weeks and thus ends with the following new moon. They pray, dancing and singing, while from time to time they kneel in order to ask for blessings.

[778] In the place where their idol stands they plant long sticks in the ground at certain intervals, on which they let flutter a number of long narrow strips of white cotton in the manner of flags.

[781] They celebrate this feast, for which no costs are spared, with all possible solemnity; it is attended by old and young and is very important among them.

Chapter IX

Conceptions about Death and Eternity

775 They believe that at death the existence of the human being ends, but that the spirit of the deceased does not disappear altogether and remains among them for a long time. Also they believe in unlucky spirits, which, as a result of an earlier evil life, must wander about restlessly, while the life on earth of the peaceful spirits is supposed to have been free of misdeeds.

They do not assume rewards in the hereafter for good deeds; /14/ misdeeds, however, in their opinion, are punished with restless wandering about.

[755] They say that those spirits know all that happens, and that they can come in contact with them at their feasts, that they receive many a hint and information, and through concealed signs come to know remedies against diseases, to which they attach the fullest confidence.

Chapter X

Marriage and Marital Life

584 Their marriages take place with few ceremonies. Frequently young men and even men ask pregnant women, in case they should bring a daughter into the world, to designate that girl as their wife,

/14 cont./

584 and, once this has been promised, she does indeed continue to be regarded specifically as the betrothed of the person who made the request. As soon as she is marriageable, she is handed over to her man with or without her consent, and it may be regarded as a rare case when such a promise is broken.

[431] The man to whom she is promised sometimes does not see his future wife before the occasion of her betrothal, but usually he is concerned with her upbringing and from time to time gives her presents consisting of money, pantjes, and corals.

[591] Some take the girl promised to them even when she is only three or four years old in order to rear her further.

[672] [682] The promising of newborn girls takes place for the most part when there are obligations between parents, as was reported in Chapter III, and in the case of enslavement which is done to one [567] family by another in case of poisoning, and so forth.

586 It is an everyday occurrence that a woman leaves her husband or a man his wife for another.

595 Polygyny is much practiced, and among my workers I know several who have three or four wives, most of whom are very young. Some, however, have only one wife.

It is noteworthy that all the wives sleep with the man in one hut, while in addition he perhaps keeps with him a girl whom he [513] is bringing up to be his wife. One wife will be /15/ with him in the hammock and lies with her feet at the head end of the man and the latter in turn with his feet at the head end of the women, while the other women sleep in their hammocks.

[484] If a Bush Negro goes out, be it to celebrate a festival or in order to float wood to the town, he takes all his wives with him; only in case of illness do they remain behind.

His wives get money separately, and therefore they must also separately provide for his food, so that one cooks the food in the morning, another at midday, a third in the evening, etc. [578] This way of life and their jealous nature frequently bring about household quarrels that rarely end in any way other than bloody fights.

585 Upon the conclusion of a marriage the man is obligated to 583 give the parents of the girl as a marriage portion a long, broad,

/15 cont./

585 white cotton sleeping blanket, various colored cloths and pantjes,
[583] some earthenware, such as bowls and plates, iron pots and pans, and the like, while he is obligated on the occasion to provide for an ample supply of strong drink and sugar wine.

They do not have festivities, games, or dancing in connection with their marriages.

586 If a marriage is dissolved, then each of the two parties again goes to his own family; in case those concerned in it and the elders disapprove of this, however, it happens that man and wife are forced to continue to live with each other, especially when there are no substantial reasons and grievances.

593 The man is obligated to provide his wife or his wives with food, clothing, and ornaments; she, to follow the man everywhere, to cook for him, to wash, and to take care of the housekeeping.

264 The wives are neat in an exemplary fashion; plates, bowls,
252 and pans are always kept extremely clean, and they also see to it that everything is extremely clean in connection with cooking.

841 If they find themselves in a period of menstruation, they
302 indicate this immediately to the husband by withdrawing from his dwelling and staying in seclusion with other women; they neither cook nor do the least thing for him in this state, do not even come within sight of him, and remain secluded to the end; when they have cleaned and dressed themselves, they decorate their shoulders and arms with white stripes as a token /16/ that they have again
[386] returned to their normal state. The stripes are made by mixing
[824] pounded adroe (1) with ground chalk and water.

1. A tuberous root-stalk from the Cyperus rotundus L.

Sometimes they also smear the forehead and the neck in this way and appear thus before their husbands.

841 During their seclusion another woman, who is a member of
571 the family or possibly a female friend, daily prepares and brings the
252 food, which, however, is at the expense of the secluded wife. They perform this service for each other mutually.

/16 cont./

868 The children learn their dances and games at a very early
858 age and are always present at the festivals.

867 From earliest youth on they are taught to respect and
689 venerate older persons; offenses against this obligatory respect are severely punished.

868 The boys in particular are taken along to the forest at an early age and remain there in connection with the processing of wood or other operations, as well as for hunting and fishing, and very quickly learn to swim.

515 Men, women, and children bathe separately in the river every day.

Chapter XI

Burial Services and Other Ceremonies

764 They celebrate the burial services with great solemnity. If one of them dies in Auca, that is, their land, then the corpse is cleaned, the nails are cut, and it is placed in a coffin, in which various and especially costly articles of clothing of the deceased are placed and to which all the relatives also add a new piece of cloth (usually blankets and pantjes) as remembrances, a farewell token on which much value is placed. Hence they always take care to have a sufficient stock of new and unused cloths.

Ordinarily the corpse lies in the open coffin for one day before the interment takes place, in order to bid it farewell. The relatives then sit around the coffin and weep ceaselessly /17/ in a mostly singsong manner peculiar to them, in which the visitors also join from time to time.

765 After the interment the closest blood relatives proceed to hold the days of mourning on a mat spread out on the ground for [538] eight days. During this time they weep loudly by turns, at the same time making the strangest gestures, while day and night, generally by turns, little stories with many allusions, and always ending with a moral solution, are told.

/17 cont./

765 [538] In these tales, called anansitori (spider-head story), the spider usually plays the main role as a personal being.

The close female relatives wear as a sign of mourning for husband, father, and mother, for a year, white or blue cloths around the head and a white cloth around the body. The men wear a white cloth around head and body only for three months, but during an entire year (since they then may not go completely clothed) they cover themselves with only a black loincloth. They also refrain from wearing ornaments for a whole year.

766 If one of them dies in the working place, in the town, or elsewhere, then the corpse has some hair shorn from its forehead and is subsequently buried without ceremonies. This hair is wrapped in a new piece of linen or cotton and brought to Auca, or their permanent dwelling place, where it then undergoes a proper burial, on which occasion all the customary ceremonies are observed as though the corpse were there.

766 787 [824] Whenever one of them dies suddenly or from a strange disease, which can arouse a suspicion of poisoning, immediately after death and before being washed the corpse is placed in a boesipapaja (1) tree (which, split and then tied together, is just

1. It is a hollow tree of very soft and unusable wood which, when split open, resembles bamboo from the inside; the leaves are broad and rasp-like.

like a halved hollow tree, at least five feet long. This kind of coffin is carried from east to west, past all those present, who for this purpose must be ranged in two rows, by two completely strange and impartial men, who are invited from other places for this purpose.

Now the place where the corpse through heavy pressure on the /18/ head forces the two bearers to stand still is where the inquiry begins, and one asks the corpse whether this place where they are now standing still is where clarification can be provided. If one notices a distinct movement of the hollowed-out tree, this is corroboration. If, after the question has been repeated three

/18 cont./

766 787 times, no noticeable movement has been observed, the answer is negative, and one proceeds with the corpse all the way to the end of the crowd ranged on either side. Everyone endeavors to be present on such occasions in order not to cast any blame upon himself or to arouse suspicion.

If, however, the answer is in the affirmative, then one asks whether the right person or a close relative of his is here; if the answer to this is also affirmative, one proceeds to inquire about the degree of blood relationship until one has finally discovered who the actual person is. Since this happens in the presence of so many persons as witnesses, it is regarded as valid proof, and the corpse is buried. However incomprehensible and impossible this may appear, this procedure is nonetheless actually practiced constantly among the Bush Negroes. I have been an eyewitness several times. [123]

695 [693] A few days later the person indicated, in case he was not present at the above-mentioned inquiry, is tracked down, if necessary fetched forcibly, and brought before the governor or the chief, who questions him in the presence of the captains or the council members. In case of denial, he is offered something to drink, which, however, he will not accept if he is guilty, since it has become apparent that whoever drinks it with a pounding or uneasy heart frequently manifests immediate symptoms, such as vomiting, swelling, chlorosis, and so forth. If the person has been prepared to brave this (in spite of the conviction of his misdeed), he is put to death by means of the most horrible and unheard-of tortures, whereas in the case of confession he is forced with the whip to reveal whom else he has poisoned during his life. [681]

696 682 All the relatives of the poisoned person are then called in order to be present at the punishment and to pull on his ears with all possible force by means of a pair of pincers, one after another. [262] Subsequently a bowl with pinda blaf is set before him, in which a turtle must be boiled, as well as a tomtom made of ripe bananas. All this, after all, is regarded as the tastiest food. He is then /19/ again severely beaten with a whip, whereupon he must eat what has been prepared for him, and immediately afterwards

/19 cont./

696 he must sit unbound on a large fire arranged in gridiron fashion,
682 so that he burns completely to ashes.

[695] Never, however, is an accused put to death before three months have elapsed after the inquiry, because there still might possibly be a chance that his innocence will be proved.

682 In the case of a confession and the supplying of clear proof
[695] that the deceased gave cause to be poisoned, the culprit frequently
[672] escapes with a light punishment; sometimes also forgiveness is granted with general approval, with the condition that the culprit take upon himself to the third generation the obligation to be of service in everything to the descendants of the maltreated person.

681 It may also happen that in the case of various other misdeeds the
672 perpetrator is completely forgiven for his misdeed, but that upon his descendants to the third generation there is imposed the obligation to render slave services exactly as in the case of poisoning.

681 The majority of these slave services ordinarily consist of giving money, strong drink, or the necessities of life, as a result of which hard work must often be done in order to be able to fulfill them. Every day they are afraid that this or that may be exacted from them. There are indications, however, that not too great a misuse is made of this.

765 Twelve months after the burial there always takes place a great gathering in the hut of the deceased, at which time the period of mourning ends with rejoicing. Exuberant festivities are then celebrated, and that night an unusually great amount is drunk, eaten, and honor salutes fired. Everyone in the vicinity, insofar as he is able, is present on this occasion.

This festival is called tesa, the ending of the mourning period, and begins after one of the nearest relatives, who enjoys the greatest respect, takes a large calabash filled with water in his right hand and with it slowly walks forth out of the hut along the other dwellings nearby and is followed by a large number of people, during which he here and there sprinkles the water,
[775] trowéwatra, in drops on the ground, saying: Like this water, the soul of the deceased will also be pure, and all that was dear to him will remain tranquilly on earth without being disturbed by him who as spirit finds himself in the spirit world.

/20/

765 Thereupon follows a second, who just like the first has a calabash in hand, but this time filled with spirituous liquor, and from time to time sprinkles a few drops of it on the ground, in token of the fact that on this occasion, too, by means of drink, they think of the deceased with joy.

Then they again return to the dwelling, where all are gathered, and celebrate an enjoyable night with song and dancing until daybreak.

Chapter XII

Character, Virtues and Vices

157 [577] [461] [609] [152] [784] [781] The Bush Negro, as I have already said above, has a great deal of respect for old age and for distinguished persons; with respect to their closest relations they are honest, which they cannot pride themselves on otherwise. In their ordinary affairs they are not lazy, but work tirelessly whenever it is necessary. With respect to strangers they are generous and obliging, all the more when they can assume that they may claim reward. Jealousy, envy, and malice are their greatest vices. Concerning many matters they have an antipathy that they call trefoe (treef). Thus, for instance, one will eat something, the other not. Also they are very superstitious in small matters, to which they cling all the way down to distant generations; they call that obia (literally translated, bewitchment, magic).

262 [123] [589] An Auca girl who through attachment to my wife and me has already lived with us in the town for fully five years, because since the death of her husband, who was one of my most trusted workers, she did not want to attach herself to another, and who performed all kinds of housework for us, carries her trefoe of not eating any unscaled fish so far that she will not even cook her food on a fire where there is a pot in which an unscaled fish was previously prepared. I know another one who uses no milk and also does not eat meat of any kind (with the exception of bacon), unless it be game, and then it must be prepared by her, on the grounds that everything is prepared with butter and that butter comes from

/20 cont./

262 milk. She does eat cheese, however, saying that there is absolutely no milk in it.

/21/

Chapter XIII

Diseases, Afflictions, and so forth

164 The greatest affliction among them, too, is the lepra boasi (leprosy and elephantiasis Fuchs), venereal diseases, leg and body 757 pains, and sores. They cure themselves mainly with herbs, which they possess in great quantities and with which they frequently work with special success. They cut open abcesses themselves; in most cases they cup themselves, making the cups from small calabashes. [824] For many pains they rub themselves with spirits steeped in paradise seed (1) and with carapa oil, which they get from the carapa nuts (2).

1. Sem. paradisie Ningre kondre pepre from the Amomum paradise Afsel.

2. Carapa gujanens Obl.

755 In difficult cases and dangerous illnesses, however, they ask for advice from the Cromantie gado, which can only be done by means of song and dance, on which occasion a great deal is drunk. [756] A wentie man (African idol-priest or priestess) qualified for this, or an influential person, is able by means of drink, song, and dance among the others to excite himself to such an extent that in a mad way, without consciousness of what he is doing, he makes superhuman leaps, turnings, and twistings with his body, jumps and dances in the fire, until he finally falls to the ground unconscious and, rolling like a tub,. foaming at the mouth, utters the most repulsive and strange sounds, which lasts until he is finally put down somewhere for dead. So long as he remains lying without any movement or sound as if in a deep sleep, one may absolutely not come near him or touch him, but must always take care to keep out of his way in his course and not to hinder him in anything.

/21 cont./

955 When he lies as though dead, except only that his eyes sparkle and are completely turned in their sockets, at which time one frequently sees only the white and red, and he moves his chest panting for breath, then he is carefully brought to the place where the Cromantie gado is put, and where questions are put to him concerning the sickness which one wishes to cure, and where the sick person himself or, in the latter's absence, some of his most recently worn garments, must be.

These questions are put with a great deal of solemnity, and answered by /22/ the person lying there. Very frequently the very strange herbs named on this occasion had favorable results.

When they proceed to such cases, the sufferer is obligated, so long as he is not cured, to continue to use the medicines indicated, which frequently had the result that after all the sick person did finally recuperate after long suffering.

If he in the least way neglects the remedies indicated on this occasion, he may often count on it that for him there is no more help, because he has recklessly called on the Cromantie gado for recovery, without the requisite reverence and observance of the prescriptions.

However this matter may be regarded, it is certainly true that they firmly believe the desired outcome will not fail so long as one does not circumvent or neglect the prescriptions in any way.

It sometimes happens that someone, after his recovery, abstains for his whole life from something or other which was
953 ordered for his recovery. Many assert that the leprosy which they contract is to be ascribed to not paying attention to what was forbidden them or their parents.

786 Almost all Bush Negroes have wentie or excitations of the African idolatrous dance-madness, which one must see in order to be able to believe and understand it. They can frequently dance fully five minutes at a stretch in a hot fire, unclothed and barefoot, without burning themselves in the least and without any sign of singeing to be seen on them.

/22 cont./

123 As a White one must enjoy great confidence among them if one wants to obtain permission to witness such solemnities. Never shall I forget the spectacle when I was present at such a festival; it took place from seven o'clock in the evening until two o'clock in the morning. During all this time I found myself in a very unpleasant state of tension. Although I found myself far from the part inhabited by us (namely the town of Paramaribo) in the deep forest alone in their midst, I was nevertheless not afraid because of my positive conviction of my influence over them. I was not at ease that night, however, and were it not for the fact that I did not want to hinder them or show them that I did not feel at ease at this solemnity, I would have departed, however eager I was to see the result of the movements. I remained, however, until all had come to an end, both for the distinction that fell to me for /23/ having been allowed to be present there and in order not to offend the trust put in me, while to myself I rejoiced at being able later to give to others the description of this solemnity.

Chapter XIV

Language, Odo, and Narratives (1)

538 1. Odo, proverb; narratives are called fori, and tales anansi-tori.

197 Their language is the Negro English customarily spoken here, but in a singsong tone with a peculiar accent.

195 As proof that during the conversation they understand you well, they constantly repeat "Yaa!"

551 When a child is born among them, aside from a general name they also give it a day name, in which for them special meanings are concealed, for instance:

/23 cont./

551 The boys born on Sunday Kwassie; the girls Kwassiba.
" " " " Monday Kodjo; " " Adjuba.
" " " " Tuesday Kwamina; " " Abenie.
" " " " Wednesday Kwakoe; " " Akoeba.
" " " " Thursday Jauw; " " Jaba.
" " " " Friday Kofi; " " Afie.
" " " " Saturday Kwami; " " Amba.

538 Their odo or proverbs as a rule have reference to their simple bush life, for instance:

539 "Te pikien boessi kiebrie joe boen, dan joe no moetoe falla biegie boessi te joe toeka naka hen"; that is,

"If you are protected by a small bush, be content with it and do not demand the bigger one that you may happen to see."

Another meaning is:

"If the little suffices, then do not strive for the greater."

"Ha srefie ayie die de falla pikien bon, de faila bigie wantoe"; that is,

"The ax that cuts down little trees also cuts down big trees."

Another meaning is:

"God, who does not forsake the worm, will not forsake a man either," or:

/24/ "Nobody is so unhappy but that days of good luck come for him"; also:

"Regard your enemy not too lightly."

Chapter XV

General Knowledge

824 This is on a very low level among them and is confined mainly to a thorough knowledge of varieties of wood and medicinal herbs in use among them.

Chapter XVI

Manner of Traveling, and so forth

484 Their manner of traveling is very simple. Usually wife and children accompany them; very rarely do they go alone. They never take along more food provisions than they consider to be strictly necessary, in order not to have any burden of great baggage, for which their small, narrow vessels made out of a tree trunk are in any case little suited.

484 As primitive people they are able to withstand deprivations
411 very well, but nonetheless they always take care to be armed when they go traveling. These hunting and war weapons consist of guns, powder, lead, bow and arrows, as well as a machete and an ax.

484 Frequently they can continue on these journeys in a small,
505 narrow corjaal (canoe) for weeks on end; there is, of course, a
[501] great lack of comforts, but they are contented so long as they
[372] merely have a little place in the corjaal where they can maintain a flaming fire, which serves for the preparation of foods and because the Negro generally finds in it a, for him, pleasant sociability. Their journeys are not of great significance; they never extend across the sea, which is the case among the various Indian tribes.

Chapter XVII

Manner of Waging War, Ceremonies in connection with Concluding Peace and Alliance

721 War is rarely waged by or among them, but when it does take place, their conflict bears the character of a thirst for revenge, treachery, and hatred.

728 At the conclusion of peace, the subject party pledges itself
[273] to satisfy the demands of the victors, provided these are mutually judged as fair. As part of the ceremonies observed on this occasion there is also a large consumption of dram.

/25 cont./

928 695 [344] The peace conditions are determined in a large building (shed). This shed is entirely open, they call it their court of justice, derived from kroetoe hoso or piketti (1). When they find

1. Piketti, place where the execution of the punishment takes place.

themselves there, whether this takes place after the conclusion of an internecine battle, or between spouses, members of a family, or former friends, the heads of the parties gather in the shed referred to and choose their places in the upper part of the building. Subsequently those concerned in this matter place themselves in the vicinity of the heads, and around these all those present who make up the public.

When all have been placed, one of the heads takes a cup (as a rule a calabash) filled with dram or still unfermented sugar [769] [782] cane. He scatters a few drops of this on the ground in various places in the shed, which signifies that their ancestors, who also once sat on this spot and passed judgment, are to be called up in the memory of all, and that the deceased, by having this offering presented to them first, have had respect paid to them.

Once this solemnity has been carried out, the cup goes around to each one, and each of those present takes a small draught from it. After it has been emptied, and none of them has refrained from drinking from it, the peace is regarded as concluded; all feuds are forgiven, and the enmity has ceased to exist.

Should it happen that one of those present refuses to drink, then he must publicly give the reason for his refusal, and then it may sometimes happen that the considerations concerning the quarrel start anew.

[693] /26/ Then the elders or council members ordinarily withdraw from the shed and leave behind only their granman (1).

1. Head or governor.

Those who have withdrawn divide themselves into different groups and consult with one another, make the matter clear and

/26 cont./

728 communicate to one another their opinions, in what way they
695 wish to see the points of difference resolved. If they are agreed concerning these, then they return to the chief in the shed and the discussion of the matter takes place anew, until finally agreement exists. During this consultation of the elders or council
[562] members a solemn seriousness prevails among them. Women are sometimes admitted to these conferences, but never have a voice, and come merely to listen and to see.

After the matter has been settled to the satisfaction of all parties, the cup once more makes several rounds among those present, and thereafter everyone goes silently and quietly to his camp or dwelling.

Chapter XVIII

Music, Musical Instruments

533 Their music is very simple and monotonous; one makes use of it, to the accompaniment of song and dance, at festivals and cult ceremonies.

534 The instruments are variously used and doubtless according to the type of event. Thus the so-called long drum, called agida (2), is played at cult ceremonies; on other occasions one

2. Papáá drum.

uses the small or apientie drum. Furthermore they have an instrument called kwakwa stool by them, a stool or board of very hard wood on which one beats with two sticks.

534 When they dance the papaá-wenti, an African idol dance,
535 they use the agida drum. For the songé, or ordinary dance, they play the small drum or apienti.

They dance the soessa to the beat of the small drum and with the kwakwa stool; in executing the last-named dance a great deal of competition prevails among the dancers, and the one who

127
534 holds out the longest and is the fastest and most accurate performer
535 of the specific steps for this is cheered as the winner.

Banja or baljaar is one of the true African dances. This name is also given to the African guitar, a musical instrument formerly generally known in the colony, but now totally vanished. This dance is performed to the beat of the two drums and the
[824] kwakwa stool. For this dance the women provide themselves with a saka-saka, a toy having the shape of a great rattle and made from a calabash filled with corals or pits of the Canna indica and Canna lutea, also called viengoe by them. They turn and shake this saka-saka according to the beat of the song taken up by them, which produces a peculiarly strange sound.

Chapter XIX

Clothing, Ornaments, Tattooing

291 Their clothing is very simple. The women ordinarily wear merely a piece of colored linen or cotton strip, called bont, two ells long and one and a quarter ells wide. They wrap this around their middle and allow it to hang down below the knee joints, calling it pangi. This undergarment of the Negro women is thus named
301] after pano (Spanish) and pagne (French). As a rule they have the upper body bare, while around the neck, the wrists, and the ankles
302 they wear strings of coral, which greatly take their fancy. They usually plait the head hair into a large number of small braids and bind the ends of these with white cotton threads. Some of them wear their hair combed out, as a result of which their heads,
301 seen from a distance, resemble large mop-heads. They are very fond of blood corals, which are greatly valued among them for ornamentation.

[292] When they celebrate a festival, they also wear a large number of colored cloths of cotton or muslin around the neck, and further adorn themselves with copper and iron rings around the wrists, among which there are strings of coral in the same manner

/27 cont./

301 as the European girl wears her bracelets. On their fingers they wear a number of copper rings, sometimes doubtless up to ten; the thumb is likewise generally decorated with them.

291 /28/ As a rule the men content themselves with merely
292 a simple loincloth or belt, but if they go so far as to dress up, then they wear a broad-brimmed hat which is usually painted with various colors; around the crown they wear a wide band whose ends hang far down over the brim.

301 Around their necks they frequently wear a string of tiger's
237 teeth and the incisors and molars of wild pigs (the pakier and piengo) and of other animal species that they have caught on the hunt; they wear these same ornaments hanging from a broad band under the knee, and to them is added now and then a shell, a piece of copper, iron, lead, and so forth. Their ornaments also include parrot and West Indian raven (1) feathers and small tassels

1. Lafroe, Psittacus macao L.

made of cotton.

301 They call the last-named obias (2). Just like the women,
751
292

2. Obia, charm. The same efficacious powers as the superstition sees in amulets and talismans are seen in this.

they wear colored cloths around the neck.

304 Like almost all tropical and African peoples, they tattoo themselves. Men, women, and children undergo this operation, and although they are set upon having this as ornamentation, they nonetheless look down upon the man decorated with many tattoos just as the European does on an effeminate dandy. There are among them those whose face and body are virtually covered with the incisions, but they are looked upon with contempt by the industrious and those most developed spiritually. They say that the former are too attached to luxury and must be lazy to waste

/28 cont./

304 so much time on the desire for this kind of ostentation. When the incisions become faint through time and the growing of the skin, they are raised again by renewed carving.

/29/

Chapter XX

The Attitude toward Europeans and the Latter's Treatment of Them

461 The Bush Negroes begin to think of work when they have
313 little strong drink, powder, and lead left on hand; they leave their
439 camp and go to the work places where they are accustomed to felling trees and working these into squared timber, which they then tie together into rafts and float down the rivers in order to sell it on the plantations and at Paramaribo.

439 Some among them, especially the Saramaccaners, bring korjalen, pinda nuts (1), and groundnuts and Tonka beans (2) to

1. Arachis hypogoea L.

2. The fruit of the Dipteryx.

439 the part of the colony inhabited by Europeans; they usually exchange
648 all this for strong drink. It is to be lamented that their trade with the Whites is frequently linked with unpleasantnesses. Generally the latter treat them with contempt. This takes place all too frequently on the plantations in particular, whereby naturally fear and dissatisfaction arise among the Bush Negroes against the Whites; it is therefore not surprising that, after having been repeatedly cheated out of their fair rights, driven by suspicion and a desire for revenge, they in turn frequently try to deceive the Europeans.

In order to make clear their attitude toward the Europeans, I shall cite some proceedings which became known to me in earlier years and which even now have not completely ceased in the colony,

/29 cont./

439 Thus it is known to me that they have gone to one or another plantation in order to sell timber, which they tie to their korjalen or canoes after having made it into rafts with bush ropes (tough liana stalks), and have misled the Europeans in a scandalous manner.

[283] [284] They make their squared timber into rafts in the following manner. Four thick strong round timbers are laid crosswise and tied together, two above and two under the korjaal; the timber is pushed in between these and fastened, so that the whole thing forms a firm long rectangle with the korjaal in the middle /30/ with which they make long journeys from the upper to the lower rivers. This timber that is made into rafts and carried along by the korjaal is called kokroko; they tie light and floating wood to long beams with bush rope (called boessitetei) (1); thus tied to the

1. From the copaiva.

heavy wood they drag it along down the river.

Chapter XXI

Understanding among Themselves

114 Not long ago I found myself among them on the river
133 Upper Commewijne on the Tempati (a branch of the river named, on the left going upstream; this branch runs into the mountains, which are reported as ruddle mountains /roodenberg/.

114 Residing among them, I made many attempts to induce
648 them to track down those in hiding who did not belong to their tribes and fugitives of a later time, and to make known to them that by governmental decree in the course of the year 1863, before the emancipation, a general amnesty regarding them had been issued, so that they could return to their former dwelling places without fear of punishment. The reason that induced me to acquaint them with this was that I saw in the return of these persons

114 /30 cont,/
648 in hiding a significant advantage for the colony, since the lack of workers in agriculture makes itself felt with increasing urgency.

202 Accordingly they promised to satisfy my wish by putting
[123] up the signs customary among them, which would make known to those in hiding my wishes to acquaint them with the good news.

In order to let those in hiding know that they were requested to come out of the forest, they go to work in the following manner.

202 They tie white and blue, also perhaps white and black
822 patches of cotton half an ell long and three thumbs wide in Rhineland fashion to the upper branches of the trees, starting in the deepest part of the forest and progressing to the river /31/ bank. The little flags placed highest are of a dark color, while the the patches tied progressively lower toward the river are white.

Those in hiding, who stay in the district and cross through the forest to hunt, discover these signs and see by them that there is something going on; either that others in hiding want to establish contact with them or that they have to fear danger.

The manner in which the signs are attached to the trees makes them understand that if they go more deeply into the forest there will be born for them a dark and dangerous future, whereas, if they can decide to go to the river bank they can walk a white, that is, a bright path and that, following the little white flags, they will find people who either want to make common cause with them or wish to give them important information.

202 Since these persons in hiding are constantly afraid of
152 surprise attack or deception, trust in these signs is not always im-
648 mediately established and thus at first only some of them go down with cunning and caution. When they come into the more inhabited districts, they watch and investigate everything that they wish to know; frequently this investigation extends all the way to Paramaribo. Now the Bush Negroes thought that if they followed their custom in this it would be clear to them why these signs had been placed in the bush and that as a result of these they would very quickly become acquainted with the declared amnesty.

202 I must add here also that in fact many fugitives or
648 persons in hiding later came out of the forests, among whom must

/31 cont./

202 be mentioned in particular the man who caused so much of a stir,
648 Broos, chief of a camp of persons in hiding behind the plantation Rac a Rac, who came back followed by many.

I must confess that I have never seen this chief and was not involved in this event in any way; the question is, however, whether this Broos and his followers came back of their own accord, or whether they returned without fear of the Whites because of the reassuring signs set up at my request.

That the Bush Negroes attached to me complied with my request by the placing of /32/ signs is not to be doubted, but what outcome resulted from it cannot be said with certainty.

Chapter XXII

Deception Practiced toward Them

114 I said a few words in Chapter XX and earlier about the
648 deceptions that the Whites practiced with regard to the Bush Negroes. I was at first diffident about communicating the unvarnished truth about this. Since, however, this is not reported by me as being generally applicable, because, as in all things, here, too, favorable exceptions exist, I therefore regard it as my duty to make my experience known.

186 The Bush Negroes, it cannot be denied, as the result
648 of the manifold deceptions that they have experienced from the Europeans and other free inhabitants of this colony, have developed an aversion toward them. They therefore oppose deception with deception, and trick with trick.

439 It has become apparent to me that many of them, when
648 they arrive with timber rafts at the plantations in order to sell the timber, after having been deceived several times, make use of all kinds of tricks in order in their turn to deceive the Europeans. I leave now to one side the question as to which of the two parties is the principal or initiating cause and has the greater responsibility in these fraudulent transactions. When a family of Bush Negroes

/32 cont./ When a family of Bush Negroes
439 lands at a plantation with rafts of timber, the man goes on land,
437 but according to old plantation custom, may not go farther than up to the residence of the overseer, who inquires about the species and the prices per foot (the prices vary a great deal depending on quality and thickness). As a rule he is not satisfied with the asking price and bargains until the seller contents himself with 40 cents for timber of 64.

When the sale has been concluded, the overseer permits the timber raft to be brought into the plantation creek, which is then subsequently, after the conclusion of the work in the fields, hauled to shore in the evening with the help of the Negroes of the plantation.

The following morning the timber is inspected and measured, and ordinarily, no matter how good the timber is or how fully it /33/ agrees with the description given by the seller, many faults are found, and the original offer is brought down to 32 or 24 cents a foot.

What must the poor Bush Negro do now? To take the timber back is difficult, a sheer impossibility, for, since he is ordinarily there with his wife and a few children, they are too few in number to haul the large pieces 25 to 40 feet long and 7/7 to 10/10 thumbs wide from the shore into the water again. He is thus entirely dependent upon the good will and the help of the overseer and the field workers of the plantation. To leave it there is equally difficult, for quite possibly, if he returns with some of his fellow tribesmen to help, he is not permitted to haul the timber off. He thus accepts the low offer. But with that the deceptions are not yet at an end. The agreement now being concluded for good, the measuring is done next, and it is truly not an unusual phenomenon that a measure of six feet, which the Bush Negro is told has a length of only five feet, is used for this purpose.

These frauds of a more or less punishable sort, alas, take place all too frequently, and during my five years of plantation life I was an eyewitness to them several times. Is it thus to be wondered at that these people, after having been repeatedly defrauded, should likewise try to do so to the Whites.

/33 cont./

439 When, for instance, the Bush Negro has cut down a
437 tree deep in the forest and discovers that it is almost hollow on
313 the inside, then he works it, this defect notwithstanding, into a
186 squared log, taking care to make the visible cavities above and below invisible by hammering wooden pins into it. After that he takes clay and mud and is able to make every trace disappear, a fraud which is thus rarely discovered before a piece is sawed off the log.

Also they practice a great deal of deception by unloading on the buyer as good stuff various qualities of timber of great and little value, but which resemble each other, for instance, by selling a low quality black kabbes (1) for brown hardwood (2),

1. Andira retusa H. B. K.

2. Andira called wassila among the Arrawakken /Arawak/ Indians.

two varieties which can be distinguished only by timber experts.

/34/ If they have worked timber that on one side is already somewhat rotten, or is worm-eaten or split, then they know how to place it in such a way in their rafts that the good side lies upward, a deception that can be discovered only when it has been hauled ashore and one becomes aware of it by turning each piece around and inspecting it carefully.

186 If it is possible to steal something from the Whites,
648 they will not fail to do so. They are also guilty of lying and give themselves the names of those who still possess the confidence of the Whites, which they can do with impunity because the similarity of their coloring and facial features makes it extremely difficult for the Whites to recognize them after an absence.

[829] This repeated trickery has accordingly made the Whites declare them to be scoundrels and liars, but the Bush Negroes, although they do not do so openly, say the same of them and
577 regard themselves as much more trustworthy and honest. That they do this with some appearance of justice cannot be denied; after

/34 cont./

577 all, toward one another as fellow tribesmen they are very honest and trust one another's word. Frequently it happens that among them one family leaves the camp to go on a journey or else is absent for some other reason, and that it must leave behind unfenced the cultivated land planted with rice, tubers, bananas, bakoven, and sugar cane. But never will another of them steal any of that. And similarly their dwellings are open, since the entrance is not closed off by any door; upon their departure they leave one thing and another in it, but they will never miss any-
626 thing upon their return. Certainly contributing to this is the circumstance that in the vicinity of everybody's property there is a sign or idolatrous image, which they call obia, to which great power is ascribed, and for those who might want to commit dishonest acts, the legend can be observed, as for the European:
784 "Beware of mantraps." The fear that they have of these obias is not unjustified, for if it should happen at any time that misuse of trust took place, then the culprit, however long it takes, upon discovery will not escape the revenge of the deceived, revenge which frequently consists in the administering of secret remedies whereby terrible diseases and sufferings, if not death, come about.

152 They are very concerned about the faithfulness of their
837 wife or wives, /35/ for the Bush Negro is very jealous, whereas the wives cannot be exonerated of being susceptible to seduction. Accordingly it happens among them more than once that marital fidelity is violated.

184 Of the various tribes, the Aucaners are the most
[177] civilized, but over against that also the craftiest, which can be
[157] attributed to their more frequent intercourse with Europeans.
[161] Among their tribes they are the most powerful, and their numerical strength is estimated at 4,000 to 5,000 souls.

123 According to the declaration of the Bush Negroes, no White has previously enjoyed the trust and attachment that I experienced from them. However, secretively they always conduct themselves toward the Whites, with respect to me they make an exception. If there is something secret among them that I should like to know, they will, upon my request, immediately and without any diffidence communicate it to me.

/35 cont./

123 Also, I am led to believe that for me they cherish a
466 more than general respect, since already for ten years now they have been faithful workers for me, a privilege to which no inhabitant in this colony other than myself can lay claim.

123 A family among them, whose head recently died --
778 according to their statements, through poisoning, which misdeed
[761] is supposed to have taken place out of envy, since I gave him preference above others, which he deserved on account of his faithfulness and industry -- has built a hut in the vicinity of its idol signs, in which they placed a crude image cut out of cedar-
[237] wood and painted with white paint. Beside that image they placed a little table and on it laid a number of quill feathers from the pouwies (1), a little bottle with black liquid, symbolizing ink,

1. A pheasant, the Crax alector L.

as well as some slips of paper. Near this little table they dug a number of steps into the ground, and at the lowermost step they made a gutter that runs in the direction of the river. Now when they have a festival with dancing and they want to pay respect to me, they place near it a number of children who constantly pour water brought in jugs, which, flowing down the steps into the gutter, streams riverward. While this ceremony takes place, songs in my honor are sung by the festive crowd.

[822] Now the image, according to their conception, is sup-
[829] posed to be a representation of me, /36/ the white color the sign that I am a White, while the quills, paper, and ink are the attributes of the Whites' higher civilization, the streaming water that I stem from the colonists who have come here from across the sea.

123 The wife of the headman referred to above came to me
589 in the town shortly after the death of her husband and remained to choose my household as her permanent residence, to which I gladly consented. Faithful and considerate, she performs not only a great many household services, but even anticipates in this respect the wishes of my wife, and out of love for us refuses any monetary compensation.

/36 cont./

I hope that with this sketch I have contributed something to a better knowledge of what our beautiful, but little-known colony of Surinam contains of importance.